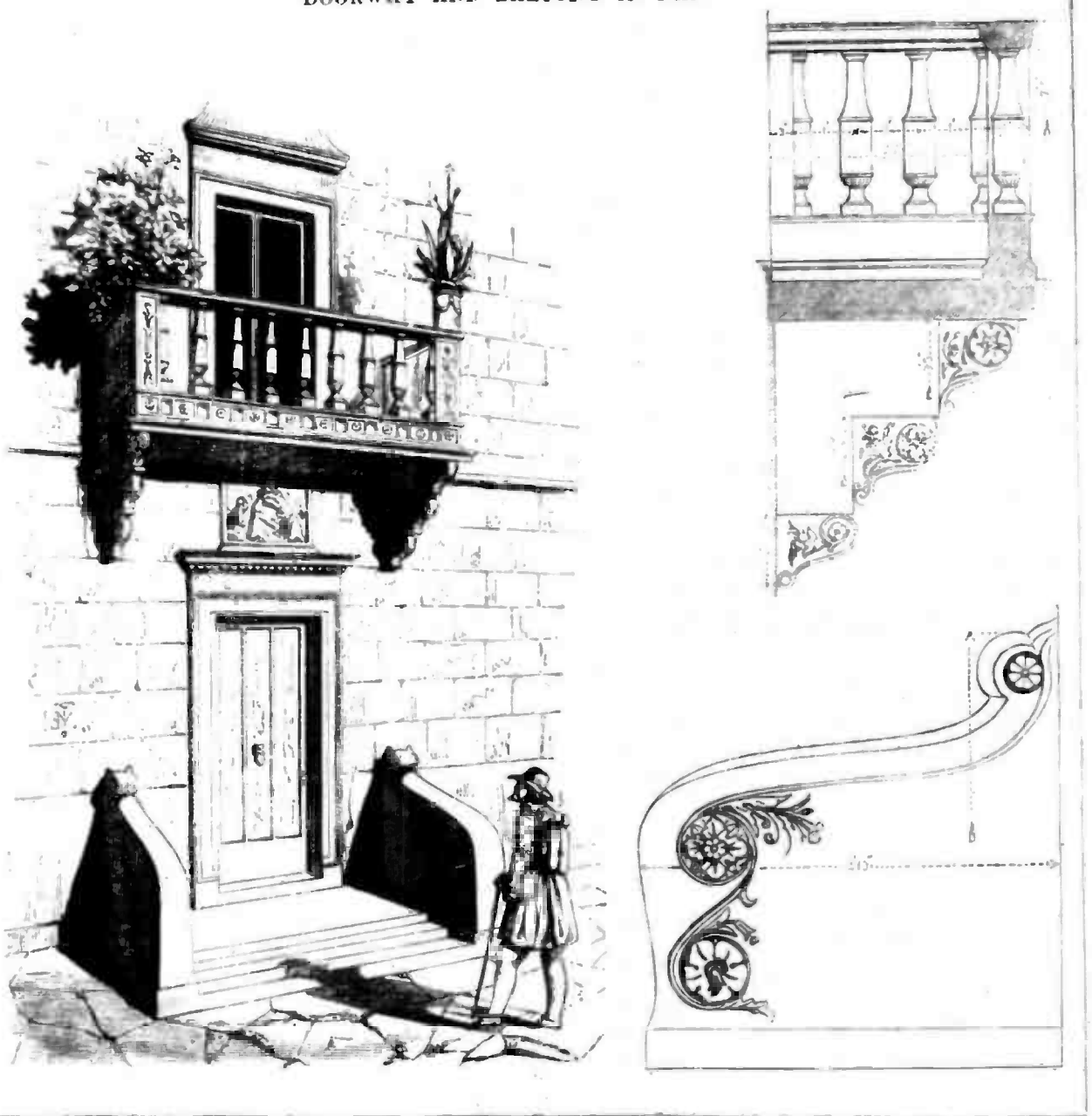
DOORWAY AND BALCONY IN NAPLES.



DOORWAY AND BALCONY OF A HOUSE IN NAPLES.

THE streets of the Italian towns offer at every turn a suggestion, a motive, or a detail, worth noting. Above we give a simple, yet elegant doorway and balcony from a house in Naples, with drawings of the more salient parts at large.

THE NATIONAL GALLERY AND COMPETITION.

SIR,—"*On dit*" is such a notorious liar, that we never know when that gentleman speaks truth or not, therefore he probably now *lies* under a mistake when he tells us that to Mr. Barry has been confided the task of altering the present building of the National Gallery, and that his design for the purpose proposes a complete change of Wilkins's *façade*, and the addition of another story to the edifice, which last alteration seems to be one rather difficult to be achieved, the exhibition-rooms being lighted from above. Hardly can they continue to be so lighted, if others are to be erected over them, unless it can be effected by some never-before-thought-of contrivance.

At all events, it seems that Mr. Barry is to be improver-general of our public structures. The only one of importance which has been metamorphosed by another architect, is Buckingham Palace—where it is certainly to be regretted that he was not employed—or, indeed, almost any body who would have avoided what we are now doomed to behold there. Had there been a competition for the new building at the Palace, many very far better ideas would, no doubt, have been offered. Neither would it have been at all amiss had there been a competition—far better regulated, indeed, than such matters usually are—for altering the National Gallery, if that is to be done, instead of an entirely new structure being erected elsewhere. Mr. Barry must have his hands quite full of business already—therefore, although a lion in his profession, he can very well afford to relinquish to others some portion of his "lion's share." Public occasions for it ought to be made public opportunities for the display of talent. In such cases opportunity should be thrown open to all. Such course is obviously the very best way of both stimulating talent, and affording it the means of making itself known; without which it may, perhaps, never be able to emerge from obscurity, owing to the want of a subject upon which to exercise itself adequately, and put forth its powers. If, owing to bad, perverse, and irresponsible management, the advantages of competition have frequently been neutralised or destroyed, they have occasionally, at least, been productive of much good. This is a truth which, of all people in the world, Charles Barry himself has the greatest reason for feeling and acknowledging, since had there been no competition for the Houses of Parliament, he would have stood in a very different position from what he now does.

As another strong instance of talent being brought forward by competition may be mentioned St. George's Hall, at Liverpool. But for competition, the late Mr. H. L. Elmes, then a very young man, and moreover of very boyish appearance in figure and person, would never have been thought of as qualified for undertaking so important a work. But for competition, again, it may fairly be doubted whether the Fitzwilliam Museum would have been, by many degrees, the classical and strikingly picturesque piece of architecture which its *façade*, at least, now is.

Provided there be but good faith and fair play along with it, competition is, in my opinion, to the advantage both of the profession and the public. Nevertheless the public is, it seems, not to have the advantage of it with respect to the National Gallery. Luckily, I have filled up my paper, therefore abstain from some remarks that might prove offensive to some persons, and conclude by subscribing myself, yours, *ad infinitum*, P.

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